

FACT SHEET

IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN LIVESTOCK OWNERS AND SHEARING CREWS

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Shearing is an important part of the successful management of sheep or goat enterprises. Wool and mohair are major sources of income to stockmen, and earnings from shearing are a major source of income to the shearer. Good relations between shearing crews and livestock owners are valuable to all those involved.

The number of skilled shearers has declined in recent years. Sometimes lack of communication between shearing crew leaders and livestock owners has resulted in misunderstandings and disagreements that could have been averted. Following business-like guidelines can help reduce the incidence of less than satisfactory shearing arrangements.

Concerns of Ranchers

Ranchers are concerned that shearers keep appointments and give notification of unavoidable delays in arrival. Also, short-handed shearing crews

cause delays in completing the shearing contract. Inexperienced shearers may be responsible for poor workmanship on both the animal and the fleece. Rough handling and actual maiming of animals by shearers also concern the ranchers. Equipment that is not of good quality, not suitable for the specific job or that breaks down causes delays.

Concerns of Shearers and Crew Leaders

Shearers are concerned about the lack of clean, well-designed and comfortable shearing facilities. Lack of ventilation for reducing heat, dusty pens, difficulty in penning animals and lack of shade contribute to undesirable working conditions. Sometimes ranchers fail to notify crew leaders of changes in plans or fail to give specific directions for finding the shearing location. Failure on the part of the rancher to provide enough animals in the shearing pens to keep shearing crews busy causes delays and losses in potential daily earnings for shearers. Maximum use of sheds would reduce delays caused by rain showers or early morning dews. Separating animals by class and condition would minimize potential losses from crowding. Wool racks and other equipment, if furnished by the

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rancher, should be adequate in number and in good repair.

Guidelines for Rancher Responsibilities

For best results, ranchers should consider and be responsible for the following:

- Contact leader of shearing crew several weeks in advance to set date and indicate number of animals to be shorn. Reconfirm date several days before shearing is scheduled to begin.
- Have livestock ready when shearers arrive.
- Pen animals several hours in advance to avoid handling and shearing sheep or goats while they are overly full.
- Avoid moves if possible. Shearing at one central location saves the crew moving time.
- Provide a clean and comfortable place to shear.
 1. A covered area with a concrete or wood floor is desirable.
 2. Arrange for ventilation of facility if possible.
 3. Provide large and properly designed shearing boards when no permanent floor is available.
 4. Sprinkle pens before shearing if water is available.
- Notify crew leader of change in plans or postponement of date as far in advance as possible.
- Provide adequate help to pen animals and keep them moving ahead of shearers.
- Provide adequate grading tables and wool racks to accommodate the size of crew working.
- Make prior arrangements with crew leader about who furnishes special labor. (In some instances the

rancher may prefer to provide wool pickers and sackers.)

- Discuss all complaints with the shearing crew leader.

Guidelines for Shearing Crew Leaders

Responsibilities of a good shearing crew leader include the following:

- Maintain calendar of shearing dates.
- Notify rancher of any anticipated delay in arrival at ranch as far in advance as possible.
- Arrive at designated shearing location on time.
- Provide an adequate crew of skilled shearers for number of animals to be shorn.
- Check equipment prior to shearing season and keep it in good working order. Carry a supply of "high use" spare parts.
- Train shearers and helpers to handle livestock gently to avoid causing injuries or death.
- Consider rancher's viewpoint before including inexperienced shearers in crew.
- Remove shearers who cut animals excessively or otherwise injure them. (These shearers may be placed in another assignment.)
- Cooperate with rancher on shearing out all animals from a pasture or ranch. (When possible, avoid leaving small remnants for following day.)
- Discuss complaints with rancher-owner.

Observing these guidelines can make shearing time more profitable and enjoyable for everyone concerned.

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